A zine about inconceivable heartache, love, mawage, an overdeveloped sense of revenge and rodents of unusual size

The minute of pale death

"This is my favourite book in the world, though I have never read it." /William Goldman, The Princess Bride (the book)

In 1987 a movie adaptation of a book was released that would come to far surpass the book in popularity. But not immediately. It got a second life and a second wind after being released on VHS. The title of this movie, as well as the book, was *The Princess Bride* – a peculiar title that has its explanation in the author William Goldman writing a story for his two daughters, which each had their own brief regarding the content (a princess story and a bride story, respectively). The book was never translated into Swedish and so there never was a Swedish book title, but the movie title got a translation. Sweden had a tradition of odd title translations. In this case the movie got the name *Bleka Dödens Minut*, which directly translated would be something like *The Minute of Pale Death*. Bleka Dödens Minut was also the title of an old poem by Swedish poet Birger Sjöberg, which when translated into English got the title *Death's hour* – so maybe this is a translation that makes a bit more sense to an English speaker. The Swedish movie title sounds way darker than the English one does, but it still rings true to the content of the movie – death plays a large part. And the title shifts the frame of mind when one is watching it.

The movie featured a cast of somewhat broken but brilliant people. Andre the Giant past his prime and with a fucked up back fake lifting people, Cary Elwes acting with a broken toe and at one point being accidentally knocked out by Christoffer Guest, Robin Wright morally defeated after being turned down by John Hughes three times in favour of Molly Ringwald, Wallace Shawn suffering some kind of imposter syndrome convinced that everybody wanted Danny DeVito instead of him playing Vizzini, and Mandy Patinkin channelling his own loss of a father into the vengeful and fatherless Inigo Montoya.

There is much to say about this great movie but perhaps we should get to the matter at hand: why is there a indie band named after the Swedish title of said movie?

In 2025 the three bands Bleak Streak, Nära Döden (Near Death in English) and Sekunderna(The Seconds in English) realized that their names combined almost amounted to said title. Bleak is almost Bleka, Nära Döden has the word Döden in it and 60 seconds is a minute. And a band was born solely around this concept. Maybe it is just silly, that's for others to decide.

Songs were written about the initial parting of Buttercup and Westley, the R.O.U.S's and of Inigo Montoya's hunt for the six fingered man and his overdeveloped sense of revenge. And perhaps a new music genre called adventure indie was born.

This small zine is an attempt to explain the songs to anyone who doesn't speak Swedish or who have never seen the movie *Bleak Dödens Minut/The Princess Bride*.

Thank you for your time and have fun storming the castle!

Love/ **Bleka Dödens Minut** (the band)

Bleka Dödens Minut

So what does Bleka Dödens Minut (the minute of pale death/death's hour) even mean? In the poem by Birger Sjöberg it seems to mean standing face to face with death. And this is kind of the interpretation we do as well.

In the movie *The Princess Bride* there are roughly four instances where "death is on the line". The first one when Westley goes away and is supposedly killed by the Dread Pirate Roberts. The second one is when Vizzini is outwitted and drinks the poison that the masked man has built up an immunity towards. The third is when Westly dies for real, or at least mostly, in the pit of despair. Finally there is the moment when Inigo Montoya gets his revenge on the six fingered man.

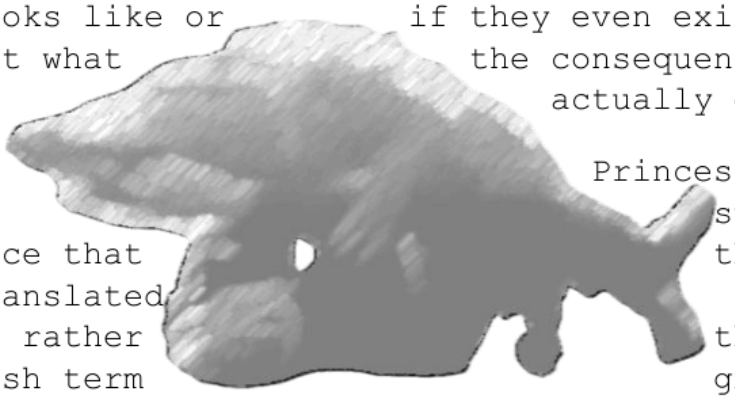
We have chosen to focus on the first one and change the perspective a litte. Our song is about when Buttercup stands face to face with the supposed death of her true love Westly, and what this does to her. The song begins with an imagined scene with Westley being out on the stormy seas, the ship getting boarded and Westley falling down during battle. Then it changes to Buttercup getting the word and being faced with the news that her true love has died. Being so filled with grief that she cannot bear it. Below follows a sloppy translation of the lyrics:

The wind is increasing. It's picking up. A storm that frightens. The swell of the waves. A ship is boarded. Battle on deck. A man falls down. And your flame's put out. When you think that all is lost. When the loss is making you ill. It's too much to bare. That's the minute of pale death. A heart is crushed. It sinks down. Down to the bottom. Never to be found. When you think that all is lost...

R.O.U.S vs R.A.O.S

Westley has returned from seemingly being dead (but in "reality" mostly doing piracy) and he and Buttercup are on the run from men that are trying to kill her and the search party of Buttercup's soon to be husband, prince Humperdinck (who, in fact shares the goals of previously mentioned men). To try to shake their persecutors off they flee into the fire swamp, a murky forest swamp, that has three known dangers: the flame spurts, the lightning sand and R.O.U.S(Rodents Of Unusual Size). Westley says he doesn't think the last type of danger exists, and as he says it he gets jumped by a R.O.U.S.

This song is taking place right before this moment. When Westley and Buttercup has fled into the fire swamp. The suspense of not really knowing what the dangers of the fire swamp looks like or if they even exist and thinking about what the consequences will be if they actually do.



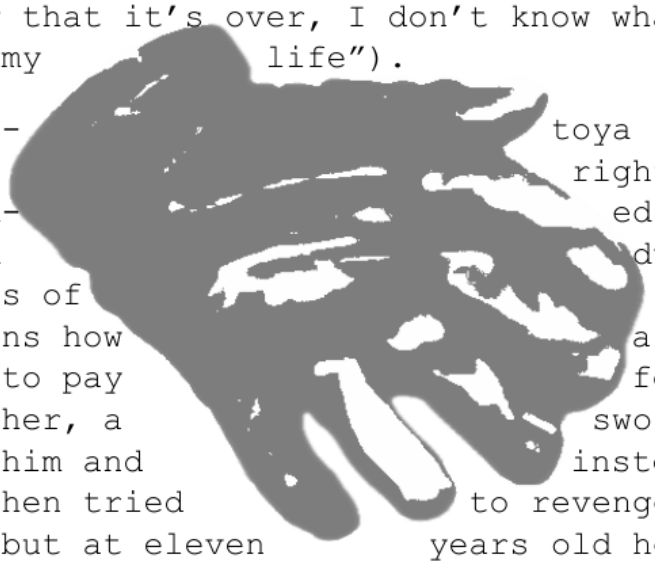
Watching the Princess Bride with Swedish subtitles one will notice that the word rodents is translated to råttor (rats) rather than the correct Swedish term gnagare. This gives the creatures a more unambiguously hostile character as rodents also can come in a more conventionally cute forms, as in hamsters, guinea pigs, capybaras or forest mice, while rats have a bad rep and is generally considered to be pests and plague spreaders.

Translation of the lyrics:

Rodents of unusual size live in the forest where we are. They challenge our courage and our toughness. They'll most likely be more than we can handle. Rodents of unusual size. Are they a myth or do they mean trouble?. Trouble seldom comes alone. And this trouble devours....

Mitt namn är Inigo Montoya...

One of the Princess Brides most memorable lines are "My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die". For a long time, it also was actor Mandy Patinkin's favourite line in the movie (with old age and wisdom being replaced with "I have been in the revenge business so long, now that it's over, I don't know what to do with the rest of my life").



Patinkin/Montoya first utters the line right before he and the masked man have an iconic sword duel on top of the cliffs of insanity. Inigo explains how a six fingered man refused to pay for a sword that his father, a sword maker, had crafted for him and instead murdered him. Inigo then tried to revenge his father immediately but at eleven years old he was bested by the six fingered man who gave him two scars, one on each cheek, but left him alive. The line is one he says he will tell the six fingered man before he kills him.

Later, when Inigo finally finds the six fingered man, who is also a Count and a kind of evil mad scientist, Inigo repeats the line and pushes through even though he gets severely wounded and he is diagnosed by the evil six fingered man with having an overdeveloped sense of revenge. In the cassette folder the first line is misprinted. It should start with "Sen jag var ett barn..." instead of "I hela mitt liv...". Here follows the sloppy English translation of our lyrics:

Since I was a kid I've been searching for a man. The fucker has six fingers on his right hand. He murdered my father and he gave me two scars…in my face and it hardened me. Since I was eleven years old I have sought my revenge. I have left my home, left the south of Spain. Roaming 'round like some sort of half criminal. Thinking about him every day. I have an overdeveloped sense of revenge

Mawage with Melody Almroth

Melody Almroth is the bass player and singer in Bleak Streak and she also plays bass in the punk rock/hardcore band Vidro as well as guitar in bands Trots and Kitazato. Apart from this she has a PhD in public health. She is also the mother of Birger the crazy cat and an expert when it comes to the movie The Princess Bride. This makes her an honorary member, and hopefully also a future actvie member, of Bleak Dödens Minut.

...oh, and she just got married so we had to ask her questions about mawage

Is mawage wot bwings us togeder?

In my case, I can with 100% certainty say that mawage is what bwought us togeder. In particular, I was able to bwing togeder a gwoup of my fawarite people from all over the world.

Where there any hidden references to *the Princess Bride* in your wedding ceremony?

I can't say that there were, although a few Adam Sandler films were represented.

Did you consider hiring a wedding officiant with a speech impediment to execute the ceremony?

We unfortunately did not have much say in the matter. Sweden differs from the US (where I am from) in that not just anyone with an email address can become an ordained minister. We had to choose someone with either a religious or political affiliation, so we chose the first available left party person, speech impediment or not.

Did you kiss Daniel's dad (your father-in-law) on the cheek and tell him that you would kill yourself after the ceremony?

I did not.

Would you like to comment on the public health situation regarding the movie the Princess Bride?

My specific area of expertise is in occupational medicine, in which case I would say it is questionable to start a romantic relationship with your hired farmhand, but I think it is forgivable. It is inevitable that some people will always fall in love at work.

Words by Lars Harefjord

Cover art by Luc Simone
(slightly defiled by Lars Harefjord)

In loving memory of
Rob Reiner
and
William Goldman